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Apuntes para una Bibliografía Antropológica de México (Somatología).

Por el Dr NICOLÁS LEÓN. Museo Nacional de México. Sección Antropología y Etnografía. México: Imprenta del Museo Nacional, 1901. 18 pp.

In the brief introduction to this useful bibliography of the physical anthropology of Mexico, Dr León, who is in charge of the Anthropological and Ethnographical Section of the National Museum, laments the fewness of those Mexicans devoting themselves to somatological investigations. The library of the Museum has few books on the subject, and of the public libraries the same may be said. Nor does there appear to exist either in private establishments or educational institutions a complete collection of anthropometric instruments. This first attempt at a somatological bibliography contains 167 entries, but does not claim to be absolutely complete or exhaustive. The omissions and some misprints in the English and German names will doubtless be attended to in an enlarged and improved edition.

ALEXANDER F. CHAMBERLAIN.

The Fundamental Principles of Old and New World Civilizations, A Comparative Research Based on a Study of the Ancient Mexican Religious, Sociological, and Calendrical Systems. By ZELIA NUTTALL, Honorary Special Assistant of the Peabody Museum, Cambridge, Mass. (Archeological and Ethnological Papers of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Vol. II.) 8°, 601 pp., 7 pls., 73 figs.

The author of this volume explains in the preface how she came to be led beyond her special field of research into a comparative study of the early civilizations of the Old World; how she traced the swastika, in Mexico, to an old astronomical source, and, in all countries alike, found its use as a sacred symbol accompanied by evidences of a certain phase of culture, based on pole-star worship and the recognition of the fixed laws of nature which found expression in the ideal of celestial kingdoms or states organized on a set numerical plan and regulated by the apparent revolutions of circumpolar constellations. Her researches seem to justify her conclusions; but she declares that she does not advance any theory. She invites further study and discussion before drawing final conclusions.

This publication reopens the question of pre-Columbian visits from the Old World to the New, and declares that the resemblances or identities between them are too many and too close to be considered mere accidents or the result of independent intellectual development.

The volume treats exhaustively of the prehistoric cultures : American, 284 pages ; Asiatic, 82 ; Egyptian, 77 ; European, 30, and cultures in general, 75 pages. The author says she entered upon this work without intention to do more than to write a brief monograph on the swastika ; this she completed in 41 pages, but by that time she became so interested in the subject and it had so widened and deepened as to demand her continuance of the work, and its enlargement into the present volume of 601 pages. It was a source of regret to the author, not having intended so large or extensive a volume, that the material for the monograph on the swastika (41 pages) was set up and printed; for before this she had changed her purpose and increased the volume to its present size, and was thus left without opportunity to revise the early part.

The author declares her belief that her prolonged study of Mexican archeology has demonstrated that the swastika and the symbols of the cross are accompanied by vestiges of cosmic conceptions and schemes of organization which can be traced to an original pole-star worship. She believes the role of the Phenicians, as intermediaries of ancient civilization, was greater than has been supposed, and that future research will show that America was colonized by Mediterranean seafarers. As the study progressed, she found in her subject an unsuspected wealth, and finally struck the key-note of the law governing the evolution of religion and civilization.

A volume on new, or at least comparatively unknown, subjects, written, as we are informed this one was, a piece at a time—which when completed was sent to the publishers and stereotyped, not to be thereafter changed,—cannot be so smooth and connected as where the author has had the opportunity to rewrite and make corrections ; although this volume shows less necessity therefor and, consequently, greater adaptability of the author and knowledge of her subject. This condition of authorship makes itself manifest in another direction which is a drawback to the efficiency of the volume and the understanding of its subject by the reader, for it is without subdivision of book, chapter, or verse. It has no table of contents and contains no notice of any proposition to be presented in the text. This failure of the book to prepare the mind of the reader for the positions sought to be maintained, is a serious blemish and a great inconvenience which could have been avoided by the editor without additional space and with but little labor.

The book has a deeper significance than is apparent at first glance. It deals with the fundamental principles of civilizations and applies

itself to all civilizations, old as well as new, throughout the world. The sub-title declares it to be "A comparative research based on a study of the ancient Mexican religious, sociological, and calendrical systems," and the subject-matter is sufficiently comprehensive to justify the title.

The volume opens with the following significant declaration :

One evening in February, 1898, I left my desk, and stepping to the window, looked out at Polaris and the circumpolar region of the sky, with a newly awakened and eager interest.

This would indicate a new light, or at least a new illumination, of the mind of the author. She had been studying the calendar, religion, and cosmogony of the ancient Mexicans ; the Aztec deities had seemed to her numberless, but as she studied them, making each time a more minute analysis, she found their number divided in a remarkable way. The primary conclusion announced is that the Mexicans painted one and the same god under a different aspect, "with different colors" according to the various names they gave him in each instance, and she instances this duplication (p. 8)—an illustration of the profundity of the study and learning of the author as shown throughout the work—by stating that the most mysterious figure of Mexican cosmography, Tezcatlipoca, whose symbolical name means "Shining Mirror," proved to be identical with Mictlantecuhtli, Lord of the Underworld, whose title means also the "Ruler or Regent of the North," since Mictlampa is the name of this cardinal point.

After having worked, during thirteen years, without any preconceived ideas about the ancient Mexican civilization and without formulating any general conclusion concerning it, I saw all the knowledge I had slowly acquired fall into rank and file and organize itself into a simple and harmonious whole. Realizing this I perceived how, with the origin of the swastika, I had found the origin of the set of primeval ideas which had governed the human race from its infancy and which, in Mexican and Central American civilizations, ultimately developed into their ingenious system of government and social organization. (Page 15.)

As author of the work on *The Swastika*¹ it is gratifying to the reviewer to note the summary formulated by Mrs Nuttall (p. 544) :

In the preceding pages the view is advanced that the ancient cross-

¹ *The Swastika. The Earliest Known Symbol, and its Migrations; with Observations on the Migration of Certain Industries in Prehistoric Times.* By Thomas Wilson, Washington, 1896.

symbol or swastika was first used by man, presumably in circumpolar regions, as a record of the opposite positions assumed, by circumpolar constellations, in performing their nocturnal and annual circuit around Polaris. Employed as a year sign in the first case, the cross or swastika later became the symbol of the Four Quarters, of quadruplicate division and of a stable central power whose rule extended in four directions and controlled the entire Heaven.

The author proceeds with her summary and conclusion:

At some remote period of antiquity man developed the idea of social organization and, in India, ancient Egypt and Babylonia-Assyria, actual proofs exist that the earliest cities and states were divided into four quarters, a division involving the distribution of the population into four tribes under a central chief. Wherever this division was carried out, it represented an attempt to harmonize human society and the establishment of the ideal of a religious democracy, founded on principles of law, order, justice, peace and good will. The pyramid, a primitive form of which consisted of four stories, and cruciform sacred structures, may be regarded as monuments commemorating a cosmical and territorial organization into four parts. The more extended conception of seven directions in space, consisting of the Above and Below, or Heaven and Earth, the Four Quarters and the Sacred Middle, the synopsis of all, was also evolved. In the confederations of India and Iran, and Arabia, in the seven-storied towers of Babylonia, and in the division of the Egyptians into seven classes, we find the earliest traces of a practical application of this numerical division.

The ancient historical records of Egypt and Greece reveal that, in the earliest politics, the population was divided into groups consisting of a fixed number of individuals, officially represented by chieftains, or officers of the state, and that, in consequence, a state formed a unit, constituted according to a mathematical scheme, which was also applied to the regulation of time. Each officer of the state held office for a fixed term, in a prescribed order of rotation. The year was divided into a fixed number of seasons, marked by the positions of a circumpolar constellation, and this therefore appeared to regulate not only the cycle of time but the governmental rotation of office and the entire activity of the community. Starting from a common basis of quadruplicate division in different countries, a great variety of constitutions of state was independently invented by statesmen and philosophers, who devised cycles produced by different combinations of numbers and signs, the object being to regulate time and communal life in imitation of the law, order and harmony existing in the motion of the stars and under the guidance of a supreme ruler, the earthly representation of Polaris.

The origin of these ideas and governmental scheme, in the Old World, is assigned by competent authorities to a northern race which had discovered the art of fire-making and evolved a religious cult and ritual suggested by it, in association with pole-star worship. Their

civilization is supposed to have been developed by contact with a southern race, in Phrygia, and to have been carried at a remote period by their seafaring descendants to India, Asia Minor, Egypt and beyond the pillars of Hercules, to European countries, situated on the Atlantic.

The present investigation brings into prominence the fact that, just as the older Andean art closely resembles that of the early Mediterranean, . . . so the fundamental principles, numerical scheme and plan of the state founded by the foreign Incas in Peru, resembled those formulated by Plato in his description of an ideal state.

The author lays stress on the fact that while there is a marked difference between the Chinese and the Mexican and Peruvian divisions of the elements and numerical cycles, the American systems exactly agree with those propounded by Greek philosophers and said to have reached them from more ancient centers of culture, presumably through the Phenicians. On the other hand, she declares that there undoubtedly exist remarkable analogies between the Chinese and Hindu and Mexican sociological, chronological, cyclical systems, their principles being precisely the same. The close analogies as well as the marked divergences can only be satisfactorily accounted for by the assumption that each of these countries derived its civilization from the same source.

Different writers have pointed out undeniable analogies and resemblances between the highest forms of American civilization and that of China, India, Asia Minor, the Mediterranean, and western European countries. At the same time modern research has shown that the seafarers, the Phenicians, acted as the intermediaries of ancient Old World civilization and formulated a culture which incorporated and formed a curious compound of elements drawn from different countries and people. . . .

As far as she can see, the conditions surviving amongst the aborigines of America would be fully accounted for by the assumption that they received certain elements of culture and civilization from Mediterranean seafarers who, at widely separated critical periods of Old World history, may have transported refugees and would-be colonists or founders of ideal republics and "divine polities" to different parts of the hidden or divine land of "the West," the existence of which was known by tradition to the Egyptian priesthood.

Under such circumstances it is apparent to the author how the American continent could have become an isolated area of preservation where archaic and primitive forms of civilization, religious cult, symbolism, and industries, drawn at different epochs from various and more or less important centers, or from the outposts of Old World cul-

ture, would be handed down, transformed through the active and increasing influence of the native elements.

There was one main element, however, underlying both foreign and native civilizations, which formed the basis of both, united and made them as one, namely, the recognition of fixed immutable laws governing the universe, attained, by both races, by long-continued observation of "Polaris" and the "Northern" constellations.

The author concludes thus :

To me the most precious result of the preceding investigation is the gradual recognition that the entire intellectual, moral and religious evolution of mankind has been the result of the fixed laws which govern the universe. From the time when our world began to revolve in space, at intervals, a luminous point of fixity in space has existed, and an unknown force, irresistible as that which controls the magnetic needle and gyrostet, appears to have raised the mind of man from ignorance and darkness and guided his footsteps towards a higher scale of existence and a more elevated conception of a supreme central power.

Thus the book is filled, sometimes with speculations, elaborate and profound, but many, indeed most times, with theories wonderfully pertinent and attractive ; with statements on every page challenging discussion, if not belief ; and with suggestions that indicate, if they do not demonstrate, not only the intellectuality and power of the writer, as well as her vast reservoir of knowledge concerning the history of mankind, but her profound study of man in prehistoric times and her elucidation of the systems of philosophy by which he has grown from the infant that he was in the beginning of time, to the giant that he became in modern times when in the full enjoyment of his strength.

It is difficult to keep this review within reasonable bounds ; nearly every page of the work contains strange and startling propositions of fact or argument which must either be stated at length or let alone altogether with the recommendation to the reader that he get the book and read it for himself.

THOMAS WILSON.